

What is claimed is:

1. An information distributor, comprising:
  - a processor;
  - a network receiver connected to said processor;
  - a transceiver system connected to said processor; and
  - a memory connected to said processor, wherein said memory includes:
    - network receiver communication stacks configured to direct said network receiver to wirelessly receive information from a system communication network; and
    - transceiver protocol stacks configured to direct said transceiver system to wirelessly transmit said information on demand to a portable computing device located within transmission range of said transceiver system, wherein said transceiver protocol stacks include:
      - a first module configured to direct said transceiver system to generate a beacon;
      - a second module configured to direct said transceiver system to detect an acknowledgement signal generated, in response to said beacon, by said portable computing device; and
      - a third module configured to direct said transceiver system to generate, in response to said acknowledgement signal, a broadcast incorporating said information.
2. The information distributor of claim 1, further comprising:
  - a battery connected to said processor.
3. The information distributor of claim 1, wherein said system communication network is a paging network, and wherein said network receiver includes a radio frequency communication device configured to receive paging transmissions.
4. The information distributor of claim 1, wherein said first module has:
  - a fourth module configured to direct said transceiver system to generate said beacon by boosting a base signal power level to increase transmission range of said beacon.
5. The information distributor of claim 1, wherein said second module has:
  - a fifth module configured to direct said transceiver system to detect an amplitude-shift-keying modulated acknowledgement signal.

6. The information distributor of claim 1, wherein said third module has:  
a sixth module configured to direct said transceiver system to generate said  
broadcast by boosting a base signal power level to increase transmission range of said  
broadcast.

7. The information distributor of claim 1, wherein said beacon, said  
acknowledgement signal, and said broadcast are infrared signals, and wherein said  
transceiver system includes an infrared communication device.

8. The information distributor of claim 7, wherein said transceiver system includes:  
an infrared transceiver configured to generate said beacon and said broadcast; and  
an infrared receiver configured to detect said acknowledgement signal.

9. An information distributor, comprising:  
a processor;  
a battery connected to said processor;  
a network receiver connected to said processor, wherein said network receiver is  
switchable between a sleep mode with reduced battery power consumption and an active  
mode with increased battery power consumption;  
a transceiver system connected to said processor; and  
a memory connected to said processor, wherein said memory includes:  
a first module configured to switch said network receiver from said  
sleep mode to said active mode to receive a first scheduled transmission from a system  
communication network, wherein said first scheduled transmission incorporates  
information;  
a second module configured to switch said network receiver from  
said active mode to said sleep mode after receiving said first scheduled transmission; and  
a third module configured to direct said transceiver system to  
transmit said information on demand to a portable computing device located within  
transmission range of said transceiver system.

10. The information distributor of claim 9, wherein said memory further includes:  
an initial schedule, wherein said initial schedule indicates a start of transmission  
time of said first scheduled transmission,  
and wherein said first module is configured to switch said network receiver from  
said sleep mode to said active mode in accordance with said initial schedule.

11. The information distributor of claim 10, wherein said first scheduled transmission  
further incorporates an updated schedule indicating a start of transmission time of a  
second scheduled transmission from said system communication network,

and wherein said first module is configured to switch, in accordance with said updated schedule, said network receiver from said sleep mode to said active mode to receive said second scheduled transmission.

- 5 12. The information distributor of claim 9, wherein said third module has:  
a fourth module configured to direct said transceiver system to generate a beacon;  
a fifth module configured to direct said transceiver system to detect an  
acknowledgement signal generated, in response to said beacon, by said portable  
computing device; and  
10 a sixth module configured to direct said transceiver system to generate, in  
response to said acknowledgement signal, a broadcast incorporating said information.
13. A method of operating an information distributor, the method comprising:  
receiving information from a wireless source; and  
15 wirelessly transmitting said information on demand to a portable computing  
device located within transmission range of said information distributor, wherein  
wirelessly transmitting said information includes:  
generating a beacon;  
detecting an acknowledgement signal generated, in response to said  
20 beacon, by said portable computing device; and  
generating, in response to said acknowledgement signal, a broadcast  
incorporating said information.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein receiving said information includes receiving a  
25 scheduled transmission from a system communication network, wherein said scheduled  
transmission incorporates said information.
15. The method of claim 13, wherein generating said beacon includes boosting a base  
signal power level to increase transmission range of said beacon.  
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16. The method of claim 13, wherein said acknowledgement signal is an amplitude-  
shift-keying modulated signal.
17. The method of claim 13, wherein generating said broadcast includes boosting a  
35 base signal power level to increase transmission range of said broadcast.
18. The method of claim 13, wherein said beacon, said acknowledgement signal, and  
said broadcast include infrared signals.